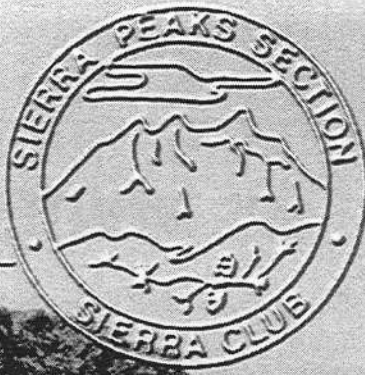


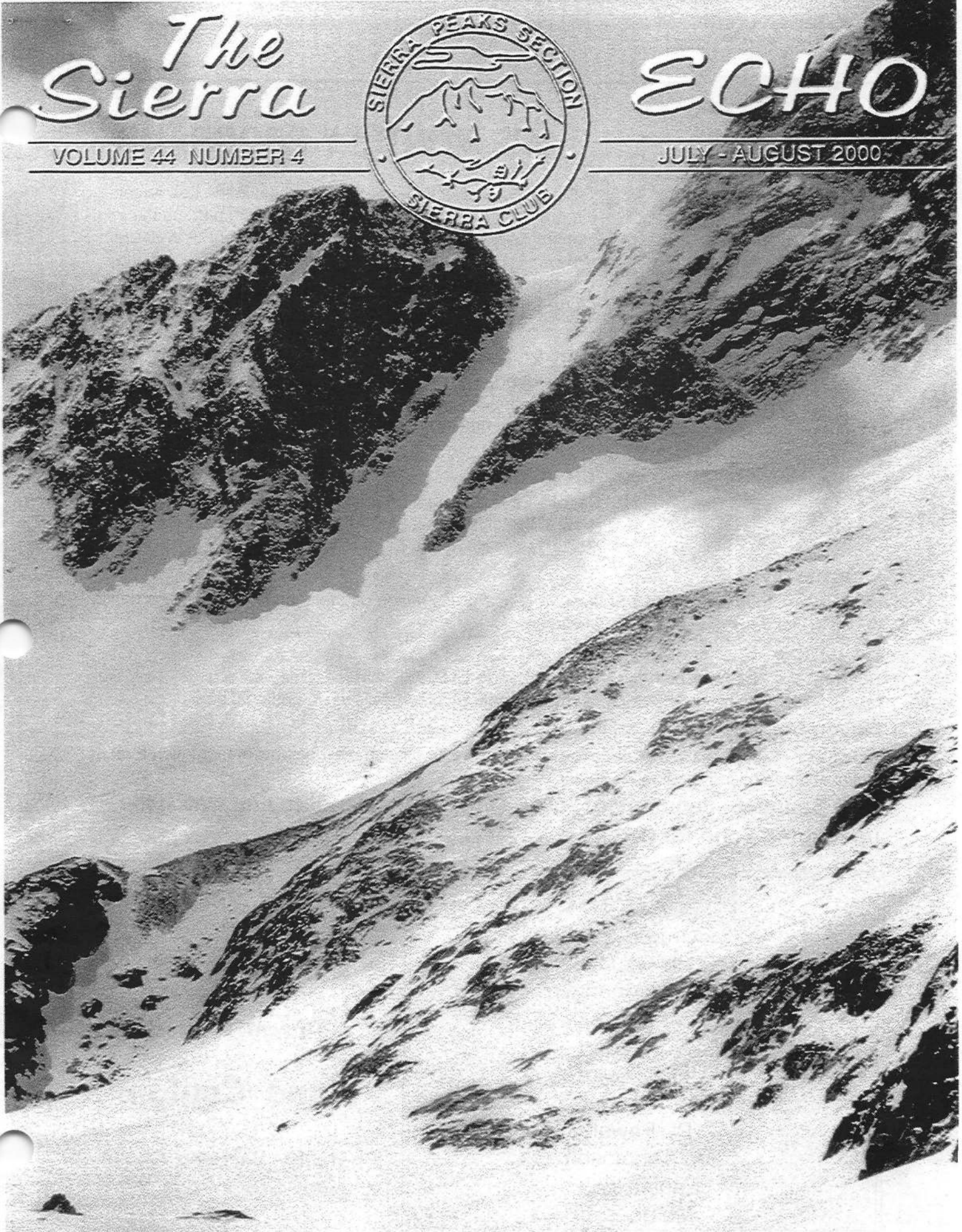
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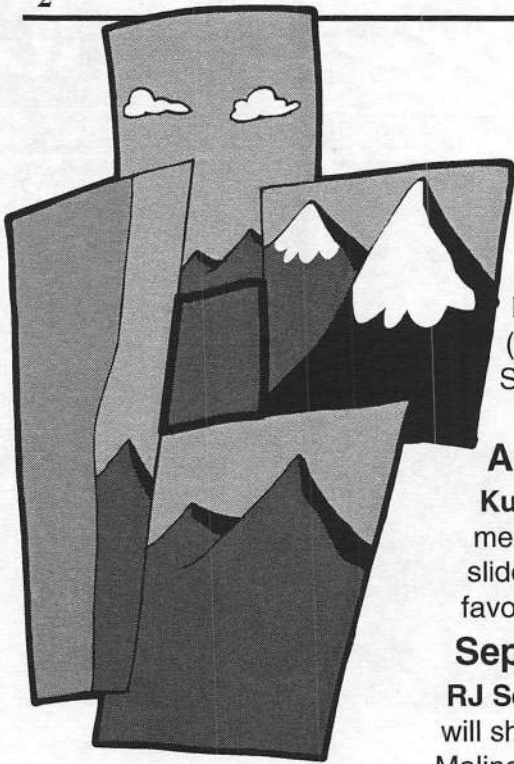
VOLUME 44 NUMBER 4



ECHO

JULY - AUGUST 2000





SPS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Sierra Peaks Section meetings are held in the Los Angeles room behind the cafeteria at the DWP, 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month. Department of Water & Power, 111 North Hope Street, Los Angeles. Free parking (please inform parking attendants that you are attending a Sierra Club meeting).

August 9

Kurt Wedberg - Mt. Elbrus, the Alps and the Sierra. Kurt, a member of the American Mountain Guides Association, will show slides of this year's trip to Mt. Elbrus, the Alps, plus some Sierra favorites.

September 13

RJ Secor - La Malinche, Iztacc Huatl & El Pico de Orizaba. RJ will show slides of his recent trip to the Mexican volcanoes of La Malinche, Iztacc Huatl and El Pico de Orizaba

October 11

Jim Lowery, founder of Earth Skills., will give a presentation on the secrets, tracking and habits of bears, bighorn sheep and mountain lions.

November 8

Sherry Ross, Natural Science representative to LTC, will give presentation on birds. Learn to recognize birds native to the Sierra by their appearance and calls while getting a peak.

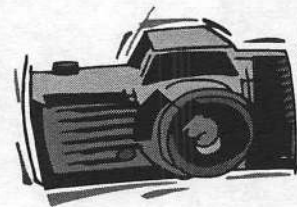
December 13

Bill Oliver - Climbing the Palisades Fourteeners. Bill will give a slide show/presentation from a National trip to be led September 2000.

SPS Banquet - January 10, 2001. Mark your calendars and watch the up-coming Echo for details.

Peak List

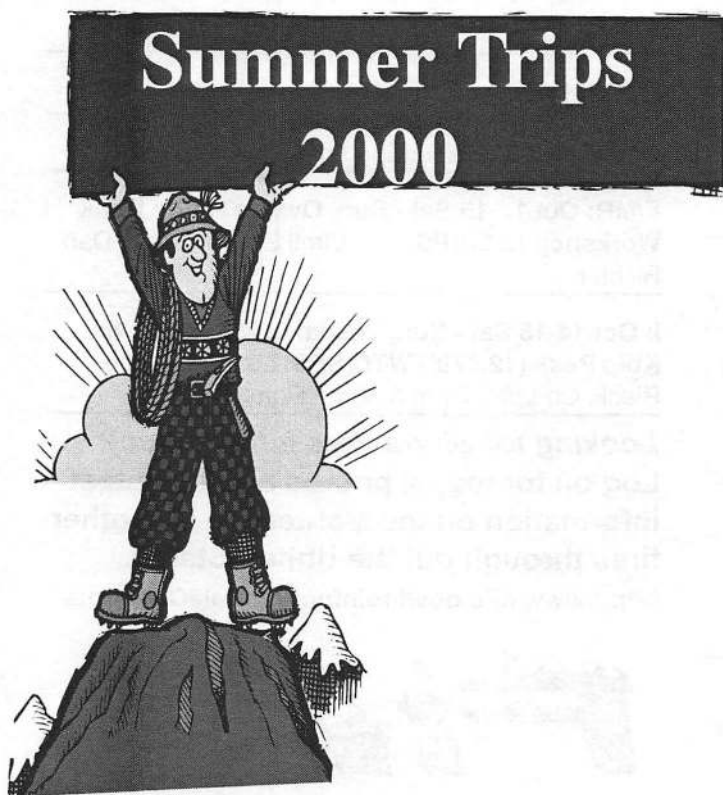
Crag Peak
 Smith Mountain
 Jackass Mountain
 Mt. Dana
 Mt. Dade
 Mt. Darwin
 Mt. Mendel
 Pt. Powell
 Mt. Thompson
 Eagle Peak
 Mt. Shasta



Front Cover

Dana Couloir

Photo by Barbara Sholle
 See Story Page 9



See past editions of *The Sierra Echo* for detailed write-ups of trips without full write-ups. Trips previously described are listed without detailed write-ups in subsequent publications. Note all trips listed as MR or ER are restricted trips open to Sierra Club members only with the appropriate rock or snow skills. For all trips remember to send a SASE, Sierra Club #, experience and conditioning resume (if you are not known to the leaders), H & W phone #s, e-mail address optional, and rideshare information.

AUGUST

MR: Aug 12-13 Sat - Sun, Mt LeConte (13,930'), Mt McAdie (13,799') Ldr. Matthew Richardson Co-Ildr. Bill Oliver

M: Aug 12-19 Sat-Sat, Goddard Canyon Week long trip Emerald (12,548), Mt Henry (12,196), Mt McGee (12,944), and Mt Reinstein (12,586). Possible Mt Fiske (13,508), Mt Huxley (13,086). Call for info. Ldrs: Barbee & Larry Tidball

I: Aug 19-21 Sat - Mon, Red Slate Mtn. (13,123') Ldr. Patty Kline Asst: Mars Bonfire, Joe Wankum

M: Aug 21-22 Sat-Sun, Mt Winchell (13,775') Ldr.: Tom McDonnell, Asst. Nile Sorenson.

MR: Aug 25-28 Fri - Mon, Mt Carl Heller (13,211'), The Cleaver (13,355'), Pk 4245 (13,920'), Mt Russell (14,086') Not for WTC students. Ldr: Ken Wagner,

Asst. Tom Sexton. Provisional Lead

MR: Aug 26-27 Sat - Sun, Dragon Pk (12,999'), Mt Gould (13,005') Ldr. Asher Waxman Asst Matthew Richardson

MR: Aug 26-27 Sat - Sun, Mt Winchell (13,775') Ldr. Tom McDonnell Asst Nile Sorenson. Provisional Lead.

MR: Aug 26-27 Sat - Sun, Mt Winchell (13,775') WTC/SPS Ldr. Larry Gibson Asst. Mike Bolde. Provisional Lead.

MR: Sept 1-4 Fri-Mon, Tower Peak (11,755), Erhnbeck Peak (11,240) Cl. 3 rock climbing and conservation. Ldrs: Larry & Barbee Tidball.

I: Sept 2-4 Sat - Mon, Joe Devel Pk (13,327'), Mt Pickering (13,474') Ldr: Carlton McKinney, Co-Ildr Beth Epstein.

Sept 9-10 Sat-Sun Smith Mtn. SPS List Finish Climb and Party for Brian Smith. Weekend and camping details to be determined based on Manter Mdw. fire closures. **Contact Ldrs. Larry Tidball and Scot Jamison or Brian Smith the week before trip.**

Sept 9 Sat., FIRST AID/CPR training - O level certification for new leaders. Training held at the Angeles Chapter office. Refundable reservation fee of \$50. Checks returned if class is attended. Send check payable to FACF, to Ann Kramer. P.O. Box 71773, Los Angeles 90071.

I: Sept 9-10 Sat- Sun, Mt. Stanford (12,838') WTC/SPS Ldr. Christy Grimsley Asst. Sheryl O'Rourke. Provisional Lead.

I: Sept 9-10 Sat- Sun, Mt Langley (14,042'), Mt Cirque (12,900') Ldr. Mars Bonfire, Co-Ildr Virgil Popescu

I/M Sept 9 - 17 Sat- Sun Northern Sierra Peak Camp Asst. Suzanne Mamedalin, Ron Jones.

I: Sept 16 - 17 Sat - Sun, Cardinal (13,396'), Goodale (12,772') & Striped (13,170') WTC/SPS Ldr: Dave Endres, Co-Ildr. Vaughn Sherman.

E/MR: Sept 16 - 17 Sat - Sun Church Dome Rock Workshop/Potluck LTC/SPS. Ldr: Virgil Shields, Asst. Darrell Lee.

MR: Sept 17-19 Sun-Tue, Mt. Russell (14,088') & Mt. Carillon (13,517') Ldr: Neal Robbins, Asst. Mike Adams

SEPTEMBER continued

M: Sept 22-24 Fri-Sun, Mt. Julius Caesar (13,200'+), Mt. Hagard (13,361'), Mt Gabb (13,741')
Ldr. Tina Bowman, Co-Ildr. Barbara Sholle.

I: Sept 23 -24 Sat - Sun, Four Gables (12,720')
WTC/SPS. Ldr: Eddie Rivera, Asst. Sheryl O'Rourke

MR: Sept 23-24 Sat-Sun, Mt. Harrington (11,009')
Ldr. Mars Bonfire, co-Ildr. Virgil Shields.

I: Sept 23 -24 Sat - Sun, Mt Gilbert (13,106') PV-SB/WTC/SPS. Ldr: Dave Heenan, Asst Bob Beach.
Provisional Lead

I: Sept 23 -24 Sat - Sun, Yosemite Volunteer Project Work under direction of Park rangers. Ldr: Keith Martin, Asst. Virgil Talbot

MR: Sept 30 - Oct 1 Sat - Sun, Four Gables (12,720'), Basin Mtn (13,181'), WTC/SPS Ldr: Beth Epstein, Co-Ildr. Ron Campbell

OCTOBER

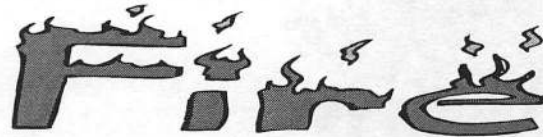
Oct 7 - First Aid Training, see Sept. 9th

E/MR: Oct 14-15 Sat - Sun, Owens Ridge Rock Workshop LTC/SPS. Ldr: Virgil Shields, Asst. Dan Richter.

I: Oct 14-15 Sat - Sun, Yosemite Backpack & Koip Peak (12,979') WTC/SPS. Ldr: Georgette Rieck, Co-Ldrs. Greg & Mirna Roach

Looking for Sierra fires information? Log on for maps, photos and the latest information on the Manter fire and other fires through out the United States.

<http://www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/nfn.html#California>



Notice to SPS Members Nominations requested.

Every year the SPS Management Committee may choose to honor a leader for extraordinary service to the SPS. The award shall be given at the annual banquet (this year to be held in January) with an article in the banquet issue of *The Sierra Echo* to honor the leader. The award may be given posthumously. By submitting a letter to the Management Committee indicating why the leader should be so honored, members may nominate possible recipients. Management Committee members may also nominate recipients and should draw up qualifications to be mentioned in an *Echo* article published each year in a mid year issue along with a solicitation for nominees. Factors that may contribute to the selection of recipients should include leadership on numerous trips over a period of at least ten years, fostering new members and leaders,

achievement of at least an "M" leadership rating, and setting the example of well-planned and safe trips. The Management Committee shall vote whether each nominee is to receive the award. More than one person may receive the award each year, but it need not be given every year.

Past Recipients:

1997	Bill T. Russell & Dave Dykeman
1998	Doug Mantle & Duane McRuer
1999	Dan Richter

Send your letters to the management committee for the year 2000 recipient(s).

Remember nominate only leaders with an M-rating and at least 10 years leadership experience with the SPS.

Larry Tidball

Echos from the Chair

July 9, 2000

I spent the first inaugural weekend of Summer rockclimbing with the SCMA at Courtright Reservoir. Also present were Ron Hudson and Paul Graff. If we had wanted to, we had a quorum for an SPS management committee meeting. The weather was fantastic and the high granite domes had a Tuolumne Meadow-like quality without the crowds.

While sitting around the evening campfire, I learned of a recent incident involving some SCMA members on Mt. Rainier. They had been caught near the summit in a four day long blizzard. They had dug themselves a snow cave, but one of them still got a bad case of frost bite on his feet. The flesh is now turning multi hues of black and the doctors are not sure whether they will need to remove some of it. This illustrates how lucky we are to have such a comparatively benign playground with the Sierra Nevada. And only a few hours driving time from Los Angeles!

Once again the management committee is having to deal with the question of a ballot issue which will affect the SPS list of peaks. If you have been following the Echo you know that the peak which we have been calling Mt. Powell is not the true high point on the mountain. Trips have been recently led to the true high point and articles have been published in the Echo. The question now is what form of question do we put to the general membership on the ballot.

One suggestion is to simply ask if the membership wishes to add the true high point to the SPS list. If passed this will result in two high points on Mt Powell being listed. One will be the true high point. The other will be the traditional high point listed by the SPS.

A second suggestion would be to have the ballot question ask whether the true high point should be substituted for the peak traditionally led by the SPS. This will result in no net increase in the number of peaks on the list but will result in one peak being deleted and another added. For list finishers an addendum could be added to the ballot measure stating that for listing purposes the peak recognized by the list in effect at the time the peak was climbed would be the peak for which credit would be given.

A third suggestion would be to have two ballot measures concerning the peak. The first measure would ask whether the true high point should be added to the list. The second measure would ask that should the true high point be added to the list, should the currently listed Mt Powell be deleted from the list although credit would be given to those who had previously climbed it.

The management committee will be considering these alternatives so that a final ballot measure can be formulated. The input of the general membership will be appreciated.

Keith Martin
SPS Chair 2000

Lynn Hill speaks out for Leave No Trace principles.

“Rock climbing’s popularity is growing every year. As our numbers increase, we are at greater risk of losing access to hundreds of crags across the nation unless we take better care of the land. We must be more careful to protect the natural beauty that exists at our climbing areas. I support the principles of Leave No Trace and invite you to do the same. Working together, we can protect the integrity of public and private lands, and access to climb there.” quote submitted by Steve Thaw, SPS Northern California Representative.

Sierra Peaks Section Meeting Minutes

June 14, 2000

Location: Department of Water and Power building,
Minutes taken by: Matthew Richardson

Management Committee

Attended By: Keith Martin, Ron Hudson, Matthew Richardson, Paul Graff, Patty Kline, Barbee Tidball

The meeting began at 7:00.

Matthew read Scott's minutes from the May 12 SPS General Meeting (there was no Management Committee meeting on that date). The minutes were approved. The committee discussed members for this year's Nominating Committee. Patty agreed to serve, and other possibilities include Keith Martin and Dan Richter.

Paul presented the Treasurer's report. We have \$3,159.80 in checking, and \$2,398.96 in savings.

Paul also presented a membership update. The SPS has 274 subscriber/members (an increase of 30 more after recent efforts to contact lapsed members). Patty discussed matters concerning programs, including a proposal to change the annual SPS banquet from December to January. Banquet Chair Barbee Tidball said that she felt the change could have advantages, and added that we would then need to change January's joint meeting with the DPS and HPS to December. It was decided to contact the other climbing sections to see how they would feel about that change.

Ron talked about outings. Matthew is looking for a replacement M leader to go with him on his LeConte & McAdie trip in mid-August.

A report from the Safety Committee concerning the recent Snow Checkoff was received. The checkoff went well.

The Committee considered the issue of confusion surrounding SPS listed Mt. Powell. Two possible questions for ballot consideration were proposed: "Shall Mt. Powell (UTM5501 13) be added to the SPS List of qualifying peaks?" and "Shall Point Powell, formerly known as 'Mt. Powell,' be removed from the List?" The Management Committee decided the matter should be continued for further discussion.

A letter from Rick Jali was shared, and given to Barbee for publication in the Echo.

Barbee discussed several current environmental issues.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11.

SPS General Meeting

New attendees were introduced.

Ron gave a report on outings. Several leaders described recent and upcoming trips. Ron also reminded about the deadline for winter trips.

Patty discussed upcoming programs.

Keith introduced Ron Hudson, who presented a slide show about his climbs in Europe's Alps.

SPS Membership Report

Management Committee has decided to delay the issue of the SPS 2000 Roster. The Roster will be issued with the Sept/Oct issue of *The Sierra Echo*. All current address changes, new members, etc. will be published at that time.

Correction - May/June Echo

Tina Bowman, Mountain Records. Address correction. Please send peak register information to Tina at 283 Argonne Ave., Long Beach, CA 90803. Do not send to 238.

(Powell & Thompson continued from page 17.) the South Fork of Bishop) Creek we had another interesting stream crossing. It's interesting to see the variety of approaches in a big group: Some did a ballerina dance on tele boots over slippery logs, others walked barefoot through the icy water, some did not care and ploughed through the gushing creek with full gear, but luckily nobody fell in. By 1:30 pm we were all back at the cars, sig out and ready to hit the Muleday traffic. It seems that everyone was satisfied with the successful peak climbing and skiing in beautiful weather and mountains.

The leaders were especially pleased that the large group had no accidents/incidents. Shows that we had a wonderful group of fine ski mountaineers.

Thanks, Mark, for helping to lead such an enjoyable outing. And thanks to Craig for the stats of the trip from his map program: 18.2 mi, 7,430', rt.

Letter to Eastern Sierra SPS'ers - May 2000

As you may have read in the March-April Echo, I have volunteered to be the SPS Eastern Sierra Representative. In this letter, I would like to introduce myself, present some ideas about current Sierra issues and what we should be doing, and ask you for your comments and concerns.

I have been in the SPS since 1957, and was Section Chairman in 1966. I have submitted about half of the peaks on the SPS List. I have also climbed in other ranges throughout the USA and the rest of the world. I lived in Washington State through the 80's, and submitted many peaks there, including the "new" Mt. St. Helens (I missed the "old" one). Now I am living in Mammoth Lakes, where I do lots of skiing, Boy Scout trips, travelling, and still some peaks..

There are many "traditional" conservation issues concerning the Sierra, which are worthy of our concern. Among them are the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Management Plan for the Ansel Adams, John Muir, Dinkey Lakes and Monarch Wildernesses (Wow! What a mouthful!), developing the General Management Plan for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, the Draft Yosemite Valley Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement, and various other revisions to National Park and Forest plans. I don't want to get too lost in the paperwork surrounding these, but remember that they do strongly affect Our Favorite Playground.

There are the proposed National Forest Roadless Initiative and Road Management Policy. Since we are closest to the Sierra, we can scout these areas and roads, and form proposals as to, which should be preserved. The debate over fixed bolts and anchors in USFS wilderness areas is still going on. I personally am interested in the Restore Hetch Hetchy idea (see Jan-Feb Echo).

But, what are your concerns? We have a special hiking/climbing point of view; how should we use it to protect and "improve" Our Favorite Playground? I feel we should go beyond the conservation issues listed above, and start new initiatives using our unique capabilities. What ideas and directions would you suggest? Let's look at all ideas, the wilder the better!

Feel free to contact me, at any of the addresses and numbers below. In the meantime, happy hiking, climbing and skiing in the Range of Light!

Sierraly, Rick Jali
P.O. Box 1717, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546-1717.
Phone: (760)934-8430 E-Mail: rikko@qnet

Mammoth Faces Threat From Mining

by Barbee Tidball and referenced from *Toiyabe Trails*, Environmental News of Nevada and the Eastern Sierra From the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club

Red Dog Resources of Reno, Nevada has submitted a Plan of Operations to mine at the Old Mammoth Mine near Lake Mary. The plan includes grading a mine access road near Mammoth Lakes Pack Station, the use of 25-ton dump trucks, trains, air powered equipment, generator power, and blasting equipment to move tons of rock. The operators plan to work the mine to a capacity of 12 18-wheel truckloads per day, operating 20 hours per day, 6 days per week from May 1- to December 15. The operators plan to mine for primarily gold and silica. They believe there is enough gold in the mine to make a profit.

The mine originally was developed over 100 years ago and has been operated on a small scale on and off over the years. It has never been a profitable mine. Environmental concerns about the new mining operation include air quality that will be affected by dust from the waste rock, blasting and the truck traffic; noise from the mining work, generators, trucks and blasting; and water shed concerns about possible toxic acid mine drainage into Mammoth Creek. Social concerns include the impact the mine would have on recreation in the area and traffic on the roads. Recreation is the main economic base in the area now.

Take Action: Write Ron Weil, Acting District Ranger Mammoth Ranger Station, P.O. Box 148, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546-0148. Tell the ranger that you are frequent visitor to the area and are concerned about the impacts of a this scale of a mining operation.

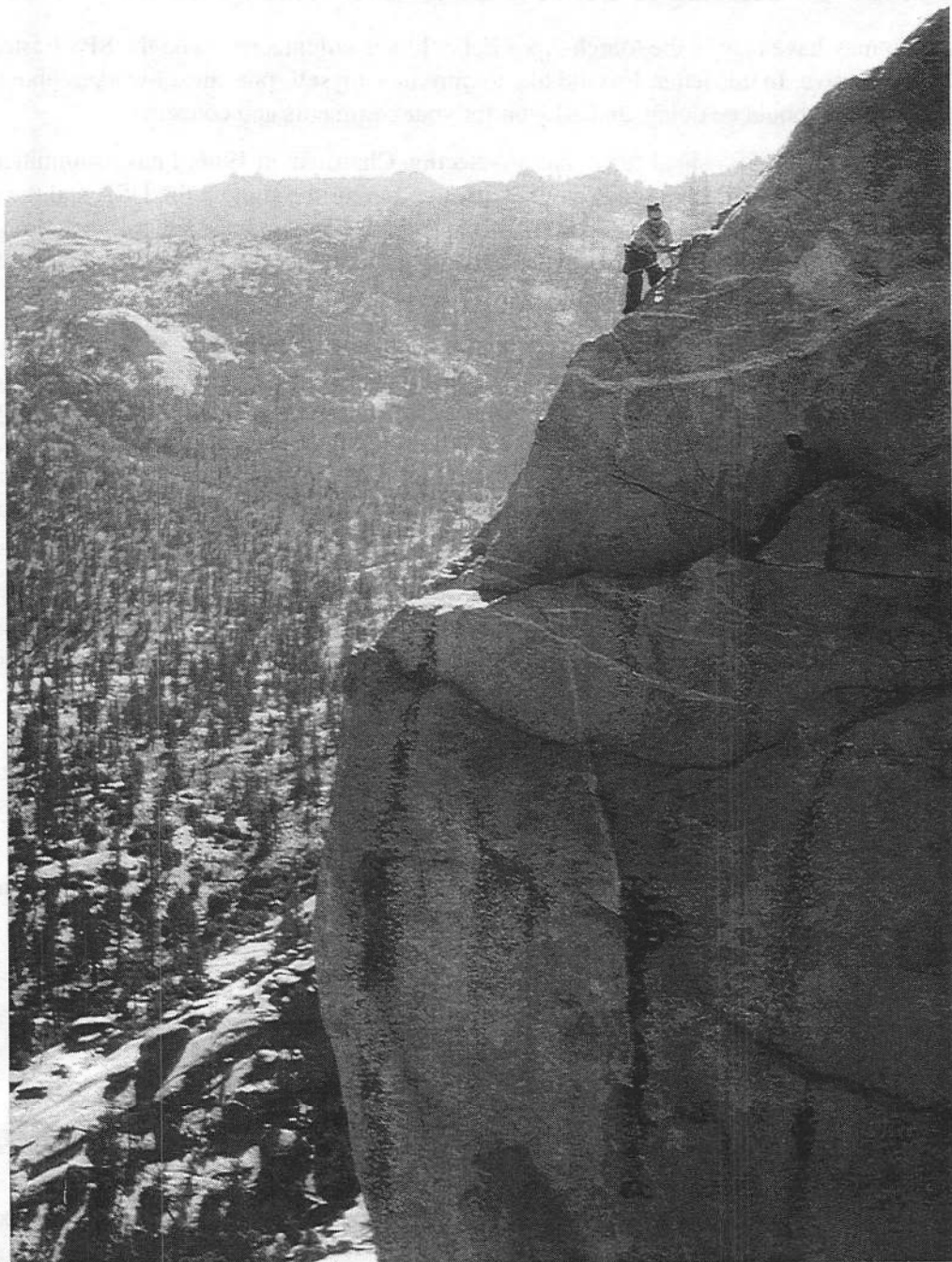
In Memoriam Harold (Bud) Bingham

by Jerry Keating

Pictured at the right on the first recorded ascent in Dome Land, Pinnacle Peak - 7652', November 1, 1958. The climb was led by Jon Shinno.

Bud, a founding member of the Sierra Peaks Section and the second person to serve as SPS chair, died May 17 in Ridgecrest Regional Hospital of congestive heart failure and complications. He was 78.

A skilled mountaineer and climbing leader, Bud succeeded the founding chair (Frank Sanborn) in 1957 and later served as SPS alternate officer (1961) and treasurer (1963 and



1968). In addition, he chaired the SPS Mountaineering Committee (1958) and was editor of The Sierra Echo (1962) when the publication advanced from the single-sided Ditto process to a two-sided Mimeographed product. His wry sense of humor surfaced frequently in cartoons that he drew for the publication. His artistic ability also was evident in 1956 when he designed the SPS emblem. That same year, he became the sixth person eligible to wear the emblem, the design of which remains unchanged today.

Bud's trip leadership skills were evident as early as the SPS' first-year schedule as he joined forces with Don Clarke on Matterhorn and Cardinal and then with George Wallerstein on Tunnabora.

Beyond the Sierra, his climbing activity included first ascents in the St. Elias Range, climbs in the Pacific Northwest and an arduous traverse along the crown of the Inyo Mountains. In addition, he was among the first persons to complete the Snow Creek-to-Idyllwild traverse of the San Jacinto Mountains in one day.

In August 1961, Bud and SPSer Elizabeth Godijn were married, and the couple finally settled in Bishop. Condolences can be sent to Elizabeth at 2735 Highland Dr., Bishop, CA 93514.

Cover Story - Mt Dana, April 22, 2000

by Tina Bowman

Doug Mantle, Barbara and Dave Sholle, and my husband Tom and I spent April 21-23 at the Tioga Pass Winter Resort, doing some backcountry skiing. On Saturday we trudged on our skis up into the bowl below the Dana Couloir. Although the wind was mostly unpleasant and the skies generally cloudy and menacing, Doug, Tom, and I went on without skis up the soft snow of the couloir, Doug doing the lion's share of the work of breaking trail. Doug and I went on to the summit, leaving an ammo box for the register. All that hard work paid off with excellent glissades down the couloir—the snow really was soft and stable. Unfortunately, the skiing back out wasn't the easy time I was expecting. One of Tom's telemark boots had half separated from the sole, making turns extra challenging. One of my randonnee bindings kept releasing when I turned, dumping me in the snow, though I also fell several times without the help of the binding. Doug patiently waited for us as we flailed about on the slopes, and then he steamed ahead when we got down to Tioga Lake and on to the road back down to the lodge.

Mt. Dade, May 20-21, 2000

by Tom McDonnell

Our team of seven assembled at the parking area just north of the Rock Creek Pack Station. The closed gate at the Pack Station preventing access by car to the trailhead at Mosquito Flat meant we had an extra 1.5 mile and 300 feet of gain for the day. But, with a blue sky, warm temperature, and visions of the great snow climb to come, the team was not bothered at all. At 0730 we set off for camp at Treasure Lakes. At first the trail was quite muddy due to the melting snow, but turned to solid snow well before Long Lake. Along the way we overtook a couple of mountaineers from the PCS of the Loma Prieta Chapter: Rich Gallagher and Tony Cruz.

We reached camp by 1100 and set about for lunch and snoozing. The sound and vision of several avalanches immediately interrupted us, including one significant slab, releasing from the steep NE shoots on Mt. Dade. The Hourglass couloir from Treasure Lakes is an impressive site and appears very steep. Later in the afternoon Nile Sorenson went over to the couloir to evaluate the snow, which seemed stable and homogeneous with depth. We used some time in the afternoon for everyone to refresh their ice axe arrest and glissading skills. Fully rested and skills refreshed, happy hour was announced at 1610. Cheese and crackers were the order of the day, some served with a turkey wedge atop. Compliments to Gregg Adams for his skill in presenting fresh popped popcorn.

The trip up to Mt. Dade started at 0600 with a walk straight across the lake. On the slopes no

crampons were used since we had Nile's footsteps to follow from the prior afternoon and the sun was rapidly softening the snow. We began the couloir at 0630 and the top of the Hourglass was reached by 0745. The group was strong and several members volunteered to kick steps. Looking down the couloir we could see the PCSers following our footsteps. We enjoyed a 15-minute break and tremendous views out across the Little Lakes Valley. The couloir is only half the fun on Mt. Dade; we had another 1000 ft to go. We continued with a trend toward the eastern ridge of Mt. Dade over mixed snow and rock. Everyone was on the summit by 0930. A new register was placed and several pictures were taken. We spent 30 minutes snacking and pointing out other Sierra peaks near and far. Everyone cheered for Ron Norton who was celebrating a birthday.

We began our descent at 1000 and down climbed the rock and snow until the top of the couloir. The couloir provided a wonderful glissade of about 700-ft, but near the bottom became too soft and sticky to slide. Back in camp by 1115, lunch, pack, and gone by 1215. The walk out became warmer and hotter with every step as we approached the 90 F of the Owens Valley. We reached the cars by 1430 and only a few complained about the extra 1.5 mile on the asphalt. Participants not yet named: Susan Livingston, Robert Amaral, and Don Croley.

Thanks to all.

Safety Committee Report

by Doug Mantle & Duane MacRuer

We are pleased to report that at the Snow Checkout of June 3-4 (at Tioga Lake), two candidates passed for "M" level snow; they and two other participants were signed off for Mountaineers List - Snow. We expect to recommend two of these participants for inclusion on the Mountaineer's List shortly.

Additionally, we are leading an M-Rock Check-out July 15-16 along with a student-led climb of Bear Creek Spire. There may still be space for a couple people seeking a formal check-out (otherwise it is full). We have three candidates for that trip to go with a horde of spire-aspirants.

LTC REPORT - SNOW CHECK- OUTS

The LTC, SPS, and DPS co-sponsored two snow check outs this year on May 6-7 and June 3-4. The trips were each a little different, but with similar results. Lots of people had the chance to demonstrate their skills in snow climbing and its associated use of the ice ax, along with learning from some very skilled and experienced examiners.

MAY 6-7:

This trip was a check out in Onion Valley. Nile Sorenson and Randall Danta were the examiners. Participants included Bill Stampfl, Carlton McKinney, Brad Hinkle, Fred Clayton, Gary Embrey, Paul Graff, Will McWhinney, Neal Robbins, and Rob Langsdorf.

This trip would be an overnight backpack into the Robinson Lake area. We spent the first day doing lots of ice ax arrests on the slopes running north east of University Peak. We used a rather steep chute with a good run out for the arrest practice. Paul Graff and Neal Robbins, seeking to pass their E level snow check off, quickly demonstrated their expertise with the ice ax in showing all how good they could use this tool. Brad Hinkle, who was seeking his M rating, also was fun to watch in his ability to demonstrate aggressive arrests quickly. All participants had plenty of practice and got plenty wet with numerous slides down the slope.

We spent the afternoon doing snow anchors and rope hook ups. Neal, Paul, and Brad then led 3 rope teams up toward Robinson Lake for our overnight spot through a simulated glacier field full of crevasses and hazards. We spent a cold windy night at Robinson Lake with an abbreviated happy hour due to 30mph winds off the icy lake. The next morning was crampon time, step chopping and some simulated emergencies. Congratulations to Paul Graff and Neal Robbins for passing the E snow check out and to Bill Stampfl, Brad Hinkle, Gary Embrey, and Will McWhinney for passing the M check out. All of these guys were prepared and did well. Fred, Carlton, and Rob got in some good practice. Much thanks to Randall Danta for helping out on one

more of an almost endless number of check outs. His experience and leadership is appreciated.

June 3-4:

The second trip was held at Tioga Pass as the snow was disappearing. Examiners were Nile Sorenson, Doug Mantle, Duane McRuer, Virgil Talbot, and helping out was Paul Graff. Wow, what a cadre of leadership experience we had for this trip!!!! Participants included Bruno Geiger, Jim Crouch, Oliver Huon, Penelope May, Richard Whitcomb, Tom Sakowych, and Cheryl Gill.

Saturday morning we parked the cars and hiked about ¼ mile to a nice snow slope that would provide an ideal practice and checkout area. We spent the morning doing arrests in an area with a good run out. Several times the run out was tested, as a few times there were some that went all the way to the bottom. Richard and Penelope were there to expressly qualify for the SPS Mountaineers List. They did so, showing their abilities in using all the techniques for snow travel and ice ax use. In the afternoon we divided into 4 groups giving each leader a chance to work with a smaller group of participants. Bruno Geiger showed his skills to Doug Mantle, Richard Whitcomb demonstrated his knowledge to Paul Graff, Oliver Huon tied knots and set anchors with Virgil Talbot and Duane McRuer put Jim Crouch through the paces in all kinds of scenarios that a leader might experience using anchors and belays. Occasionally, Nile would wax eloquent in explanations of technique variations involved with use of tools or ropes, probably to the boring dismay of all. Nevertheless they courteously listened.

Congratulations are in order to Jim Crouch and Bruno Geiger for passing the M level snow check out. Oliver, Tom, and Cheryl got in some good practice and came away with a great deal of new knowledge. All had a good weekend with beautiful weather. Thanks are in order to Doug Mantle, Duane McRuer, Virgil Talbot, and Paul Graff. The body of knowledge and experience of these leaders was a great help and certainly rubbed off on all those in attendance.

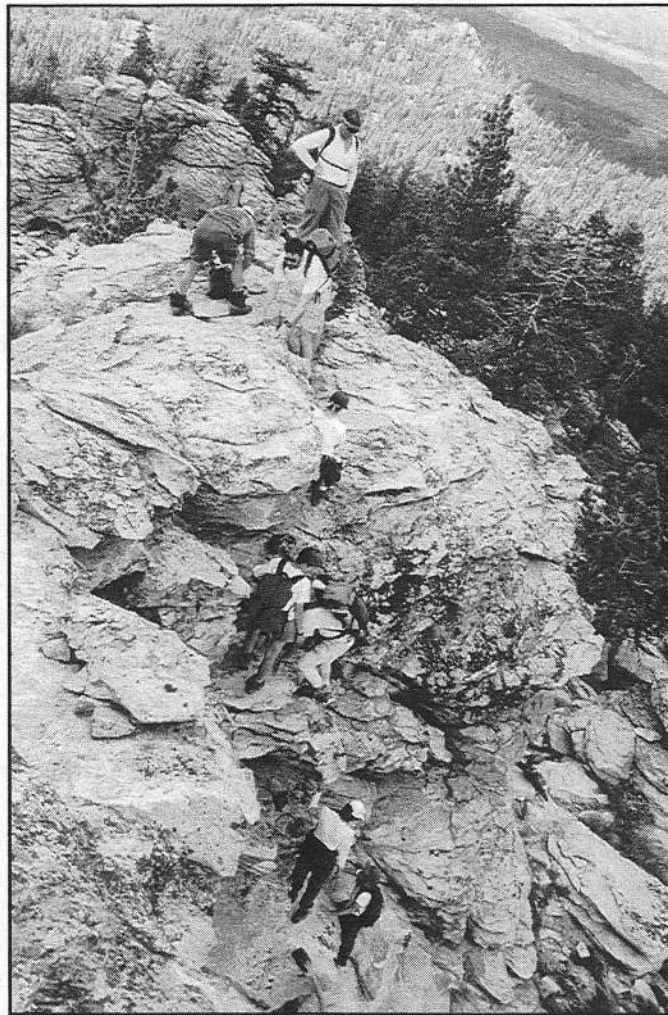
Crag Peak, Smith Mountain, Jackass Mountain

May 20-21, 2000

by Beth Epstein

Our group of 13 met at 8 am at the Kennedy Meadows store, after variously sleeping at Kennedy Meadows, PCT trailheads, BLM fire safe areas near Kennedy Meadows and driving from LA that morning. This was a co-sponsored WTC-SPS trip which cast a wide net for participants, with experienced SPS members Carol Snyder, Richard Whitcomb and Pete Yamagata, and renewing SPS member Ken Jones down from Washington, as well as WTC students Yukie Kanda, Laurence Cagnon, Alessandra Poggi, Michael Partos, Judy Holloway and Ken Hooper. Kim Gimenez and I were the leaders.

We caravanned to the signed Forest Service road turnoff for the Hooker Meadows trailhead, 7.7 mi. from the store. (The road designation has changed from Jenkins' guidebook, and the more westerly turnoff was closed.) It was a beautiful sunny day with a pleasant breeze and we hiked the 5 miles to Albanita Meadows in a little more than 2 hours at a leisurely pace, enjoying the big trees and wide meadows. At Albanita Meadows we turned west toward Aqua Bonita Spring, hoping for a slightly fresher water source than the small streams running through the grazed meadows, but the fenced spring was covered by a thick and remarkably bright green layer of algae, so we backtracked a little to some wide sandy areas on the south side of the meadow near a small "falls" in the stream. After setting camp and eating lunch, and hanging food, having seen some bear scat and tracks, we headed off to Smith, staying on



Climbing towards the summit.

the Albanita Trail until just past the Jackass Creek turnoff, then hiking through the forest to Smith's north ridge, which is heavily ducked. At the summit block, Richard, Carol, Kim and I offered spots on the little east wall and along the walkway of the ridge, and we all enjoyed great views of the Kaweahs and Monache Mountain and Olancho, completely bare on its west slope. On the descent we picked up a motorcycle path which turned into the Jackass Peak trail and continued on to Jackass Peak, per Erik Siering's recommendation.

Jackass Peak is wonderful to look at from Albanita Meadows and Smith Mountain, showing off its sheer south face. I'm not sure how it got its name — maybe the double summits look like

donkey ears or it makes you feel like a jackass for thinking it might be hard to climb, but the newer climbers were all amazed at what a fun and easy scramble it was. We headed to the base of the southwest side and diagonalled left up to the saddle, then right to below the summit block, which is not the most southerly outcrop. An exposed walkaround leads to the summit, but Carol pointed out a good crack to its left. No one much liked my imitation of a donkey bray, so we went back to camp, a total of just slightly over 4 hours for the two peaks.

The food fest began promptly and continued past dark. Everyone brought great stuff, but particularly notable were Yukie's curry with fresh veggies, Alessandra's Italian spread with salami and provolone, Laurence's marinated red peppers & olives and Ken H's fresh fruit salad, for which he thoughtfully

provided forks and plates. Mike started a campfire and Judy read us a chapter on mosquitoes from Spineless Wonders to distract from the few insistent ones which appeared. We hung food again that night and although we saw no bears, the following weekend one of the waitlisted participants, Mercedes Alfariz-Gordon, camped at the same spot with a small group and reported having watched a bear lolling across the meadow.

The next day we were up at first light with another beautiful day and off by 6:45 for Crag. We hiked east on the Albanita Meadows trail until the stream veered south in the meadow and the main trail diverged north. We headed south following a bearing, but would have been better off looking for the use trail, which either the cows or the forest service had forged to the saddle of the ridge intervening between us and Corral Meadow, which Kim caught on the return. We crossed Corral Meadow, continuing up a gully toward the 8600' saddle on Finger Rock ridge at UTM951960, hoping to contour around to the saddle between Finger and Crag — wishful thinking. The manzanita got in the way, and we went up, down, over and through some extra landscape to get there. The saddle to Crag was pleasant, and following Erik's route, we headed toward the named summit to avoid brush, but it has become very overgrown in the 200' below the ridge. The experienced HPS hikers all commented that it was reminiscent of an HPS peak. One of the WTC students asked whether this was the S&M section rather than the Sierra Peaks section. We went over the top of the named peak and down to the saddle below the SPS summit and patched our wounds.

After contouring east around the base of the rock, Richard

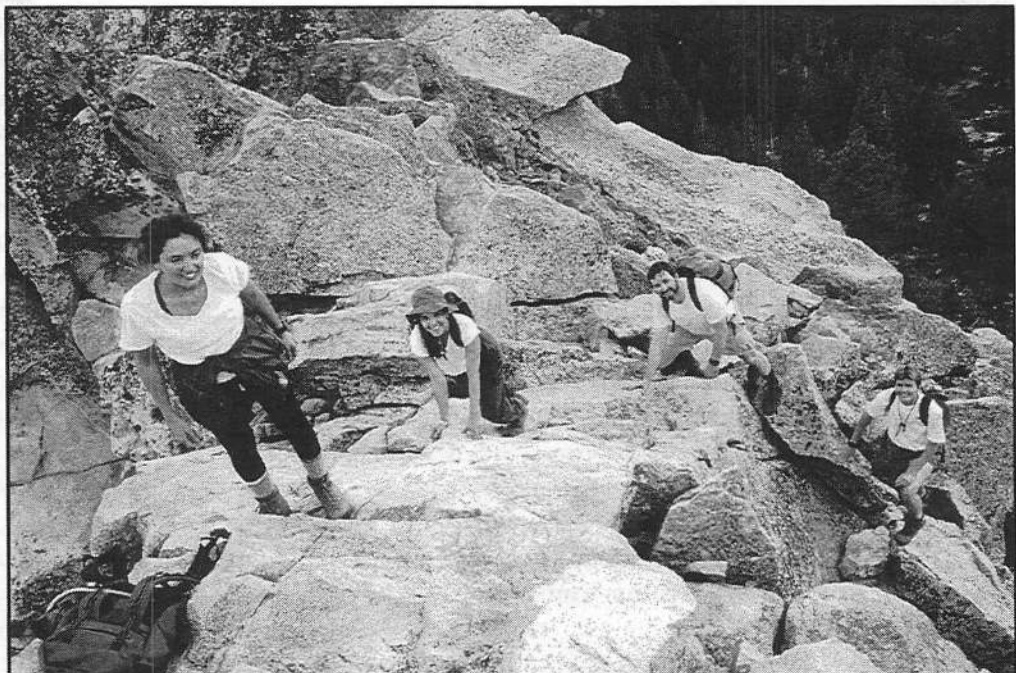
*Photo: Climbing
Jackass Peak
Alessandra Poggi,
Rachel Inclan, Ken
Hooper, Kim
Gimenez*

August 2000 - Manter Meadow Fire

Forest Service reports and maps of the Manter Fire thru August 4, 2000 show blackened areas from Troy Meadow camp ground to Kennedy Meadows and south to Church Dome. In addition there were four lightning strikes surrounding Crag Peak. Forest Service photos of the area, show a very different landscape from the one viewed by Beth's group in May. It will be interesting to watch the land around these peaks as the vegetation begins re-grow over the years.

The current 72,730 acre Manter Fire, named because the fire started from a lightning strike in the Manter Meadow area, is burning extremely hot due to large amounts of brush and is burning through land that has not had a fire in many years.

and Kim and I scouted for the peak, which is the more northern on the block. Richard ended up climbing the traditional knife-edged northern route, and Kim found the wide crack which Erik had described, which starts just before a downed tree. Kim, Carol and I spotted along the route and sent folks up to Richard three at a time. We were on the



summit by 11:00, and took a break for lunch before heading back. Pete recommended Steve Thaw's route down the talus slope which starts just south of the saddle between the named peak and the summit, so we descended that way, avoiding downfalls and brush fairly easily to the saddle between Finger and Crag. From there, we headed up slightly to the right of the ridge rising from the saddle which was pretty clean going. The manzanita began again just beyond the benches at 8880, so we meandered over the ridge looking for an opening in the maze, finally descending the southwest trending gully to Corral Meadow, where we happened upon a good use trail until near the meadow, where it disappeared amid the deadfall. This gully is obscure from the meadow, but is south of the fences and a rock outcrop at the edge of the woods.

We returned to camp and packed out to the cars, the last hikers in by 5:45. Those of us heading back



Photo - Summit of Smith Mtn.

Carol Snyder, Rachel Inclan, Judy Holloway, Kim Gimenez, Richard Whitcomb, Ken Jomes, Ken Hooper, Laurence Cagnon, Yukie Kanda, Michael Partos, Pete Yamagata, Alessandra Poggi

to LA stopped at Don Cuco's in Lancaster, 1106 Ave K, for dinner.

These peaks are often dayhiked, but I enjoyed wandering quietly along the edge of the meadows at dusk and sunrise, and the Hooker Meadows trail is a very pretty hike, without the logging and motorcycle scars found elsewhere in the area. This was a perfect weekend to be where we were and I am grateful to all the participants who made it a fun trip, and to Ann Kramer, Erik Siering and Ron Campbell for their helpful route information.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE - URSACK/ BEAR BAGS!

The newest attempt at a light weight, bear proof way to carry and store food fails the test.

The following report by Barbara Sholle is not encouraging for those of us who wanted to purchase the \$39.95, 4 ounce bear proof bag. If after reading this you are still interested see Ursack.com.

Friday, July 21, 2000, on our way in to Humphreys, Dave and I met two women at Piute Pass who were heading out. They had come from Tuolumne Meadows with some friends who were continuing to Walker Pass. The friends had a bad experience with their Ursack. Neither Dave nor I remembers exactly whether the bear actually got through the Ursack or if the food was crushed beyond use, or if the bear hauled away the Ursack. In any case, the women we met gave their friends their bear canisters to use for the duration of the trip. They felt that the canisters were the only sure way to protect food.

Darwin, Mendel & Lamarck

June 16-18, 2000

Leaders Neal Robbins & Nile Sorenson

We assembled at the hiker parking at North Lake on Friday morning for a 7:00 am start. Participants included Neal Robbins (our well prepared leader), Ron Norton, Richard Whitcomb, Penelope May and me bringing up the rear. Our goal was to reach Lamarck Col, climb Lamarck peak and descend into the Darwin Lakes basin to camp. This would be a big day and all were prepared. The cross country route by Lamarck lakes is well documented in many write ups. Neal led us through the tricky areas remarkably well. We had no difficulty in reaching Lamarck Col. We dumped the packs and headed to Lamarck Peak. This is an easy class 2 climb. The only difficulty was actually believing we were on the summit, since the south slope is just that, a slope, and not a real summit until you look over the north face. There are several spots along the crest of the ridge to the west that are actually higher than Lamarck. Neal led the group to the right spot even though some of us were trying to go further west to these higher places.

Descending down into the basin we found some reasonable spots to camp. There was plenty of snow and running water everywhere so we did not go all the way down to the lakes.

Saturday morning we started at 5:15 am. We put on crampons just a few hundred yards from camp. Neal kicked steps all the way up to the Darwin Glacier, and then up the glacier to the notch, which provides access to the west ridge route on Darwin. This notch is formed by a nice snow chute leading to the crest of the west ridge of Darwin. It is well described by Secor and in other SPS write ups. It is easy to spot and identify. The access to the chute proper, proved a little difficult due to snow coverage over the class 3 rock approach. We did some mixed climbing on steep snow and rock just above rocky cliffs to get into the chute. Once in the couloir, we had 40 to 45 degree snow easing up as we went higher to the crest of the ridge. Thanks to Neal and Ron for kicking steps. After gaining the ridge, the traverse to the plateau is easily done by staying just to the right or the south of the crest as described by Secor and others.

There are several descriptions about the detached summit pinnacle. It is not difficult! One

can descend down into the small notch between the plateau and the pinnacle on either the left or the right side. It doesn't matter. The key is to go around the pinnacle itself on the right or south side. It is not necessary to drop below 15 or 20 feet from the level of the plateau. Once on the southeast side of the pinnacle, climb the easiest crack system to the top (there are 2). It is a little exposed but is not hard. Once on top, all gave high fives.

The descent down Darwin across the plateau, ridge, and chute, was a little tricky in the same area near the bottom of the chute. Shallow snow provided unsecure anchors with the ax, so we fixed a rope for one short pitch on a descending traverse. We were back on the Darwin glacier by 1:30 and headed for Mendel. Somewhere in all the climbing that morning, Richard had ripped out the seat of his pants. Any snow sliding for him now became rather "exposed".

Mendel is a route finding problem. Just read the write ups and note the confusion regarding the east face route. There had been a large slide on the east face with tons of rock debris covering the glacier. Maybe that is why the route is difficult because it is changing. Oh well, maybe this will help.

There are two crux problems on the east face of Mendel. One is getting into the correct chute up on the face. The second is exiting this chute to surmount the summit plateau. First let's get the big picture.

When you look at the east face of Mendel from a distance, it is easy to spot a snow gully rising from the glacier, diagonally to the right (north). I will call it a snow gully even though it may not have snow in it by August. This gully can be seen going almost to the top of the ridge extending north from the peak. This gully is where the climb begins. It is a mistake to climb it to the top. To the left (south) of this snow gully and higher up there appear 2 distinct debris chutes that rise more or less toward the summit area. They actually rise up just slightly to the right (north) of the summit plateau. The left most (or southern of these 2 chutes) appears to run directly up into some steep headwalls or cliffs forming the summit block

proper. I will call this the left debris chute. This left debris chute is the one you eventually want to get in and climb. In order to get into this left debris chute from the original diagonal snow gully one must traverse to the left (south) on a ramp or shelf or ledge. Here lies one of the problems. There are several ledges or ramps that run left. How does one know which ramp or ledge system? I will tell you because I tried several, so here goes the route description, starting from the glacier.

Climb diagonally up into the snow gully off the glacier for several hundred feet. Some write ups say about 500 but that depends on where you are starting on a nondescript snow bowl. As you ascend this snow gully take the second ramp system cutting off to the left. It will traverse only about 30 to 50 yards. If you have mistakenly taken the first ramp system, it will go much longer than 30 to 50 yards. If you are on the correct ramp you will come to an end and can see the lower ramp system below you continuing on rising toward the south. This sort of end point you are in will now be in the correct debris chute, although it will not look like you are in a real chute. Climb upward over the easiest way staying in the chute. It will eventually widen into a wide sandy gully taking you to the base of the summit headwall. None of the climbing to this point is more than high class 2 or very low class 3. You now should be standing below the headwall of 100 to 150 foot cliffs that are higher on the left than the right. There also appears to be sort of a notch or small saddle right above you. This was filled with snow and may be where the chock stone spoken of by Secor is, however we couldn't see it due to snow. We had two choices. Go left or right.

If you go to the left you will be climbing a steep crack system visible in the cliff. It looks sort of like a chimney with what has been called a chockstone at its head just 20' below the rim of the summit plateau. It is not a real apparent chock stone. It is sort of squarish. We did not go this way and cannot comment on this route except to say that it is very vertical and appears exposed but is very direct with no searching around.

If you want to go right, just climb easily up to the ridge that is forming the right hand wall of the gully which you have been in. Climb the talus on this ridge till you reach the summit ridge where you will run into some large blocks. This is the main summit ridge running north from the actual

summit. You will now have to search around for a way through the large blocks to the west side of the summit ridgeline. This will allow you to cross the notch spoken of earlier. We found some low class 3 moves here. This area is only about 60 feet or 10 minutes from the summit, so don't give up. After working through the blocks, we crossed the notch spoken of previously, on a snow cornice, which of course may not be there other times. Above the notch area is where the key hole is. The key hole is entered on the east side of the ridge and dumps you out on the west side of the ridge blocks. It is very distinct and you cannot mistake it once you find it. Climb along the west side with one class 3 move and you are on top. We made the summit in just over 2 hours from the glacier. We had a strong team and were back at camp by 6 pm. Wow what a great day.

That night most of us were awakened by what sounded like very close and very loud thunder. It turned out to be a large rock slide on Mendel in the area where we had climbed, so we don't know if the whole foregoing description is still accurate or not. Good luck.

Sunday, the hike out over Lamarck Col back to the cars was enjoyable. We were in the cars a little after 1:00pm ready for Pizza in Bishop. Thanks to Neal for a great lead and Ron for kicking steps, and Richard and Penelope for wonderful company and good climbing.

by Nile Sorenson

TEN WAYS TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT!

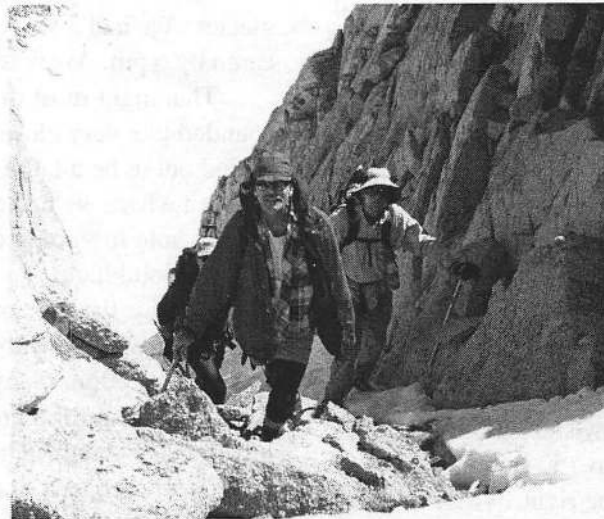
- 1 - Walk softly, collect memories.
- 2 - Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.
- 3 - Stay informed.
- 4 - Leave your vehicle behind. Carpool.
- 5 - Just say "no" to destructive practices from ORV to bolting, drills, and snowmobiles.
- 6 - Rediscover. Learn about the history of your favorite places.
- 7 - Stop Alien Invasions. Encourage packers to use native feed. Try not to transport plants.
- 8 - Vote. Urge candidates and elected officials to protect the environment.
- 9 - Volunteer. Help out with an environmental cause, visit a proposed wilderness area. Encourage other to do the same.
- 10 - Write letters, be involved, be an activist.

POWELL and THOMPSON

May 27-29, 2000

by Reiner Stenzel

This outing was a joint SPS and SMS trip which included peak climbing and ski mountaineering. We had a great turnout of 14+1 participants, climbed both peaks, skied our hearts out, and enjoyed three days of sunshine in the beautiful Sierra Nevada. "We" means Mark Goebel, Bahram Manahedgi, Jim DeRose, Russ Haswell, Randy Lamm, Maciek Malish, Richard Geist, John A. DiGiacomo, Doug O'Neil, Craig Connally, Susan Connally (private trip), Michael McDermitt from the Bay area, Terry Flood from the San Diego area, and Ruth von Rotz von Truckee. We met on Sat, 5/27, 6 am, at Sabrina Lke, arranged our common gear, shuttled our packs from the remote hikers parking lot to the trailhead, signed our lives away on all the restricted trip forms, and left by 7:30 am. Of course, it started with hiking, since the snow line was much higher than Lke Sabrina (9,128'). To the fishermen we must have looked pretty weird walking in big plastic boots and heavy packs with skis up the trail on a summer-like day. After an easy mile on the trail, we crossed a gushing stream by balancing carefully over slippery logs and submerged rocks without falling into Bishop Crk. Patchy snow started near Blue Lke (10,400'), and past Donkey Lke (10,600') the trail vanished under the snow and it was time to ski or to posthole. By noon we reached the Baboon Lks (10,976') where we took a long lunch break. The large group had become spread out but we had radios to keep in contact. The Baboon Lks were partially open and I could not resist to try out my fishing gear. Two trout later we had a long discussion about our planned basecamp at Sunset Lke (11,464'). The vote was for staying at the sheltered and scenic Baboon Lks instead of a barren, frozen, high-altitude lake. Since this was further from our peaks we agreed on an Alpine start next

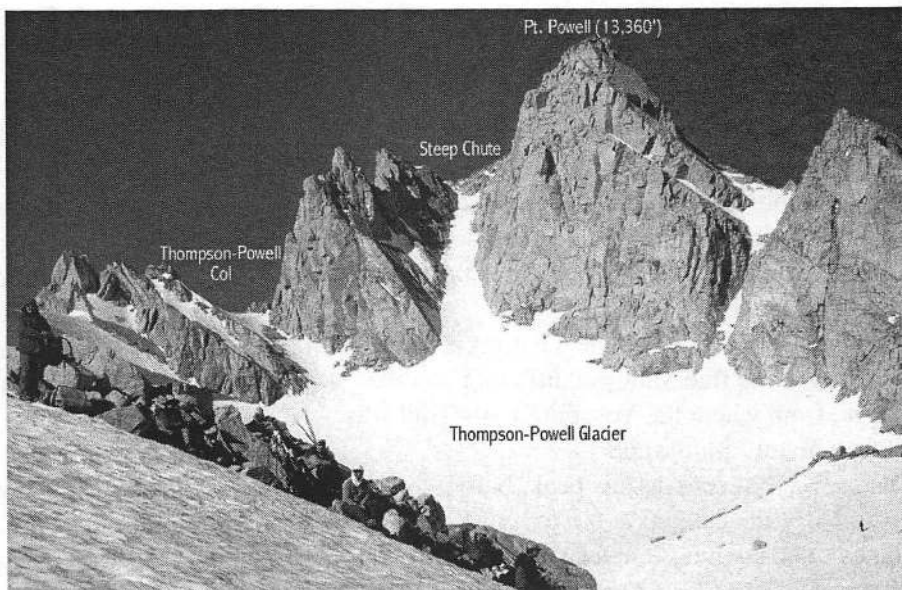


Terry and Craig near top of steep chute to Powell

day. So we had a long afternoon free for skiing the local slopes and reviewing some mountaineering skills. Mark held a practice session for the proper use of ice axe and crampons, I set up snow anchors with skis, everyone tied into the rope and was belayed. Later we climbed on the ridge between Sunset and Baboon and carved many pretty turns into the soft spring snow. By 5 pm we regrouped at the community snow kitchen for dinner. Brook and rainbow trout were fried in butter, together with onions, potatoes, tomatoes and a twist of lemon, a real delight. We dined and talked in our tight, but cozy kitchen until it got dark. Spring time is such a delight, no mosquitoes, no bears to worry about.

On Sun, 5/29, the alarm bell was ringing at 4:30 am. For a large group it usually takes a bit longer to get ready, thus by 6 am we were all on our way. We cramponed up the creek drainage to Sunset Lke, carrying our skis on light day packs. Early in the morning, the lake was frozen solid and we could safely walk across it. After another ascent up a long moraine we were on the Thompson-Powell Glacier and had a clear view of our route. There are two obvious choices to climb Pt Powell: A steep chute leading directly to the plateau and summit, and the gentler Thompson-Powell col (right side of two cols) which leads to the Southwest side of Powell from where one can ascend the plateau via easier chutes. I took 9 participants up the chute while Mark took 5 over the col. My plan was to continue from Powell to Thompson while Mark planned to climb Powell only. We left our skis close to the col where we would return from Thompson. In retrospect we should have carried our skis up the chute since there was more snow on the South facing slopes of Powell and Thompson than we had expected. Climbing the snow filled chute in the morning presented no problem of rockfall or sliding. But

it was a good workout, especially for the first person kicking the steps by front pointing. We switched leads and when Maciek had his turn it became very quiet in the chute. On the plateau we enjoyed a great view of the endless range of snow covered Sierra peaks. Since Mark's group was still way below the plateau, we proceeded and summited Point Powell (13,360') by about 9 am. [It is well known that the SPS peak is not the same as Mt. Powell (13,364') on the Darwin topo map, see Echo #43, 1999]. It was a pleasure to sign the SPS peak register as the first group in 2000, particularly in a half-filled booklet from 1964! We called Mark by radio and later rendezvoused with his group as they came up the Southwest slopes where we would descend. Since we had no skis the next best fun was a long glissade down to Lke 12,120'. After our numb rear ends had recovered we began the ascent of Thompson via a steep snow filled chute between 12,400' and the plateau at 13,200'. On the second peak climb, the pace began to slow down, perhaps because energetic Russ was not leading. He had come down with food poisoning and waited for our return. But Jim was in top shape and helped blazing the trail. Mark spotted us from the summit of Powell and radioed that our group moving up the chute looked like flies on a window. But it was more crawling than flying. Finally, by 1 pm, the first were on the top of the cl.3 summit block of Thompson (13,494'). A cold wind was blowing but the view on the cloudless day was superb. From Goddard to Darwin to North Pal, every major peak was in clear sight. A minor disappointment was that the peak register, a cast metal box with bottom lid, was empty. So we left a sheet with our names and a pen, took some pictures, snacked and returned. We descended a slightly different route, i.e., a snow-free chute filled with quartz, interesting green and black rocks, one of which now sits on my desk. After barely avoiding some rock releases we returned to the snow and plunge stepped or glissaded down, then traversed and climbed back up into the Thompson-Powell col. The exercise of climbing two



SPS peaks began to wear us out, even 200 hp Bahram fell behind. But the best was still to come: After exchanging ice axe and crampons for skis and poles it was a delight to telemark/parallel down the col and glacier, leaving many pretty tracks behind. At 3 pm the spring snow was getting pretty soft and the tracks were occasionally interrupted by holes. Conditions were just right for fat skis. Ski-less Terry continued his workout downhill. He wisely chose a detour around Sunset Lke since crossing a narrow snow bridge near the open shores was possible on skis but not on foot. More turns brought us back to basecamp at the Baboon Lks where we regrouped with the Powell climbers. We were all satisfied with a fine day of ski mountaineering. Thanks to our early start it was only 4 pm and we could now enjoy a long relaxed afternoon. Some rested, some took an icy bath, I pulled out three trout for dinner. We all gathered for dinner in the snow kitchen which came with a source of fresh water: Apparently, we were so close to the lake that digging into the snow produced a nice waterhole. After sunset it became breezy and cool and we retired to bed by 9 pm, just after a beautiful moonrise over the Thompson Ridge. In the night gusts of wind shook trees and tents.

On Monday, Memorial Day, we got up leisurely at 7 am, ate breakfast and packed in the sunshine, and hiked/skied out by 9:30 am. Skiing down with full packs through trees and bushes is another backcountry experience which a lift ticket cannot provide. The fun ended near Donkey Lke where we rediscovered the trail and marched out like normal hikers. At Blue Lke we regrouped for lunch, and at

A YARTS ADVENTURE TO EAGLE PEAK (7,779¹)

Having been apprised of a new bus service to Yosemite Valley, I drove to Merced, CA, to catch the 8 a.m. departure of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System bus, being conditionally free for an introductory time period. The normal round trip fare would be \$15. This obviates the regular \$20 park entrance fee.

Arriving at Yosemite Village Visitor Center at 10:40 a.m., I took the free Valley shuttle to Yosemite Lodge, from where the Yosemite Falls Trail was about a quarter mile walk.

I had seven hours to do this peak, before the last free bus ride for the day left at 6 p.m. Eagle Peak is signed to be six miles one way, with a start on the Valley floor of about 4,000 feet elevation. I estimated that the total dips on the way to add another 400 feet of gain, round trip.

Pushing myself hard, I reached the Valley rim at 6,800 elevation after a little over two hours. There are a few trail junctions en-route to the peak. I arrived there by 2:22 p.m., snapping photos quickly. The snow was spotty already on the higher peaks. Three other hikers were sitting on top, with some having come in from the Tioga Road.

Leaving after ten minutes, I hurried back down, fearing some delay, which would cause me to miss my free ride. But, I was back to the Valley floor by 5 p.m. Having time for another shuttle ride and a couple sodas, I got a good seat for the return ride along the Merced River Canyon on Highway 140. We arrived back to the Merced Transportation Center (16th and O Streets), and its free parking, by 8:40 p.m. I was home to Sacramento, after dinner, by 11:13 p.m.

The bus is a full-sized motor coach, with about 60 seats capacity. You are allowed backpacks. There is air-conditioning, with a single restroom. The Highway 140 route includes stops at several lodging points, and with three or four stops in Mariposa. There are some 13 runs each day.

Other branches of this bus run sparingly from Coulterville (Highway 132/120), Wawona (Highway 41), and from Mammoth Lakes via Tioga Pass.

For more information on the bus service, the YARTS web site is at www.yosemite.com/yarts.

June 5, 2000 00 by Pete Yamagata

Air Quality - Poor to Unhealthy - In the Sierra !!!

Ron & Leora Jones were traveling through the SMOGGY Central Valley and came across an article by William Tweed, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Chief Naturalist, in the *Visalia Times-Delta* newspaper. Following are excerpts from the article. It is disturbing to read that our Sierra air-quality is so threatened. Remember to carpool, and drive fuel-efficient vehicles on your Sierra travels.

"...What many folks don't know, however, is that the air can be as unhealthy in the mountains as it is on the valley floor."

"...We have known for some time that the middle altitudes of the Sierra have very high summer levels of atmospheric ozone, an odorless, colorless gas that is toxic enough that it is sometimes used in concentrated form to kill waterborne pathogens in lieu of chlorine. We also know that ozone is not good for human lungs. Hot weather intensifies ozone." Air quality index (AQI) forecasts are posted for the Central Valley and now also for Sequoia &

King's Canyon National Park. It is significant to learn that air quality in the Park is poor enough to warrant these forecasts.

"... the air quality in Giant Forest was not only almost as unhealthy as in Visalia, but actually worse than in Fresno.....If the model of recent past summers holds again this year, this level warning (*an un-healthy AQI level*), officially called "unhealthy," will apply to perhaps half the days in July and August.

Consider what this means. During these next two months, perhaps one day out of every two, park rangers will be posting information in our visitor centers warning visitors that it is unhealthy to walk the parks' trails if that hiking involves prolonged deep breathing!

This message is so contrary to everything the parks stand for that it is hard to call this situation anything other than tragic. If national parks are not places to encourage strenuous outdoor activities, what indeed are they for?"

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EDITORS: Barbee Tidball & Barbara Sholle. Mailing Address 3826 N. Weston Place, Long Beach CA, 90807, Phone (562) 424-1556. E-Mail: bsholle@aol.com. Echo cover layout by David Sholle. ECHO copy deadlines are the third Saturday of odd numbered months. Please send trip reports, photos, slides, articles, jokes or any other item of interest for publication. E-mail, Computer Disks IBM format/MSWORD-WIN or Word Perfect are appreciated. If you would like your submission returned to you, please enclose a SASE.

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